

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
January 6, 2015
Delancey Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Debby Moore
John Malone
Gail Pantezzi
Francis Tuoti, Chairman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Linda Gracie
Marcia Rockwood
Steve LaRocca

ALSO PRESENT: Susie Thompson, Town Historian
Janice Will, Recording Secretary

Chairman Francis Tuoti wished everyone a Happy New Year and opened the meeting. He noted Marcia Rockwood's absence and said the HPC will hear about the Croton Falls Presbyterian Church at their February meeting.

Cemeteries

Susie Thompson stated that the Town's rules/restrictions regarding cemeteries can be read on-line in the Town Code. She said she spoke to Ward Hannaburgh (Highway Superintendent/ Superintendent of Cemeteries), and they are in agreement that if the Town's cemeteries are recommended for landmark designation it would not be appropriate to propose any changes to the rules for Peach Pond and June cemeteries as people still own unused plots. Ms. Thompson added that Mr. Hannaburgh would go along with whatever the HPC does. She suggested the HPC designate a single cemetery first, and she thinks it should be Cat Ridge Cemetery because it needs the most help/repairs. Once the cemetery is designated, the HPC may try to get grant money for repairs.

Chairman Tuoti asked what needs to be done.

Ms. Thompson explained that numerous headstones need to be re-set, which is not an easy job. She noted that in Bedford, a non-profit group was formed so that money could be raised to hire professional people to do restoration work. Ms. Thompson thought that once a cemetery is designated someone can take some time to write a proposal for grant money/perhaps the HPC will get an interested group involved. She remarked that the Town's cemeteries are already protected by the Town Code, and the Highway Department does a good job of maintaining them.

The Chairman asked why the Highway Department can't re-set the stones.

Ms. Thompson said guidance is needed, and some markers go down as much as 5 ft. underground/it is a big job. She said she ordered a repair kit but has not tried to use it yet.

Gail Pantezzi like Ms. Thompson's ideas and agreed that direction is needed for repairs/the HPC would not want to make things worse.

Ms. Thompson said she would like to try and get Cat Ridge Cemetery designated this winter.

Ms. Pantezzi said the Lions Club is looking for a project; perhaps they can be of assistance with the cemetery repairs.

Ms. Thompson said they probably can, but professional guidance will still be needed. She offered to prepare the application for historic designation of Cat Ridge Cemetery.

Ms. Pantezzi noted that separate applications will have to be prepared for each cemetery, but she also thought it would take a lot of time for the HPC and the Town Board to hold separate public hearings for each one.

Ms. Thompson thought that if designation of Cat Ridge Cemetery goes well/the HPC can get some people involved, and then all the other cemeteries could be recommended at one time.

The Chairman asked what other people would do if Ms. Thompson writes the application.

Ms. Pantezzi said they could raise funds and maybe do some physical work also.

Chairman Tuoti wondered if companies that do this kind of work would be willing to supervise volunteers in Town.

Ms. Thompson said she knows of a company in Connecticut that Bedford has used that might offer a cost assessment.

To proceed with an application for historic landmark designation of Cat Ridge Cemetery:

Motion by: Gail Pantezzi

Seconded by: John Malone

All in favor.

Certified Local Government Program

The Chairman noted that the information about the benefits of participation states that enrolled groups are eligible for grant money but also makes clear that municipalities are encouraged to pay 40% of the cost of projects themselves. He stated that the application process is competitive and also merit- and need-based. He added that even once funding is approved it is paid as reimbursement after the local group pays for the entire project/ does the work. Chairman Tuoti remarked that a small town like North Salem might not be in a position to do this.

John Malone commented that North Salem also might not seem “needy” in terms of qualifying for grant money.

The Chairman stated that qualifying project categories are training, public education, and survey/designation, and also projects are also considered based on state-wide issues including heritage tourism, economic revitalization, affordable housing, historic landscapes and farmlands and minority populations and potential usefulness to other communities in the State.

Debby Moore said she could not see how these criteria would apply in North Salem.

Chairman Tuoti read that SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) also evaluates how projects fit within their communities, and they assess whether a community has the personnel and fiscal/ administrative resources required to undertake the work.

Ms. Pantezzi said she read the Benefits section twice and spoke to 2 people at SHPO, and it is her understanding that the only people to get funding from the CLG program are municipalities or non-profits who own the property they want funding for. She stated that the program is Federal and administered by the States; both want to raise standards/levels of professionalism and are willing to provide funding to accomplish this, but there is not so much money available. Ms. Pantezzi stated that Julian Adams has revived the CLG program and more towns have been certified as a result. She commented that North Salem is quite small/there are a limited number of professional people involved, so it is unlikely that it would be eligible for much support money/they would be competing with larger municipalities that have more well-established highly-staffed groups.

Ms. Pantezzi said she still thinks it would be good to apply for certification/line up with the State model, explaining that if a proposed local project was threatening in some way, North Salem would be better able to get support/assistance from the State. She offered to do the work/draft necessary changes to the local law.

Ms. Thompson said it has already been done/was just not further pursued and suggested Ms. Pantezzi contact Julian Adams to see if the changes made are still appropriate and nothing more needs to be changed.

Ms. Pantezzi reiterated that funding might not be a benefit to North Salem.

The Chairman said they might be eligible for something, and it could be a good thing to put a grant proposal together and see what comes of it.

Ms. Pantezzi said it seems to her that the State wants to raise the level of professionalism in local organizations and make sure research is thorough. She added that they seek a model that can be used elsewhere in the State. Ms. Pantezzi said a small project that interests North Salem would be unlikely to interest the State; they are looking for documentation, professional standards, etc.

Ms. Thompson commented that no one on the HPC has been trained although Steve LaRocca is an architect.

Ms. Pantezzi stated that HPC members are supposed to submit resumes that state their qualifications.

Mr. Malone remarked that the State seems to want a lot of qualifications, and he asked how the State would check to see if people are qualified.

Ms. Pantezzi said that is what the resume submissions are for.

Ms. Moore asked if (since the Code will have to be changed any way) the HPC could make changes considered in the past for inclusion of rules for designation of historic districts.

Ms. Pantezzi agreed that it would be a good time to do so if that is what the HPC wants, although she would ask that someone else work on the historic district section. She said she just wants North Salem to comply with the State CLG model.

Ms. Thompson thought the HPC should be realistic about what they can accomplish and consider what kind of time commitment it would take to write a historic district section of the law (part of which is already in the law).

Ms. Pantezzi thought the issue had been the definition of historic district.

Ms. Moore remembered that it was one of trying to decide to what extent owners of property in a historic district could be restricted in what they do.

Ms. Thompson recalled that not everyone in Purdys wanted the district, but Ms. Moore said there had been just one person against it whose property could have been by-passed.

Ms. Thompson stated that the HPC should just try to accomplish one thing at a time, and the Chairman agreed.

Ms. Moore was agreeable to putting off work on historic district law.

Ms. Pantezzi will get the CLG paperwork together and keep the HPC up-to-date on her progress/get their input.

Chairman Tuoti asked if they will have to submit resumes to the State, and Ms. Pantezzi said they will.

Ms. Thompson said she had not gotten the impression that Julian Adams was concerned that they would have a problem.

Ms. Pantezzi said she is not concerned; they are not professionals but they are dedicated and knowledgeable. She will work on the changes to the historic preservation law with input from the rest of the HPC, and get something ready to submit it to the Town Attorney.

Ms. Thompson suggested consulting the Town Clerk about procedure for such a submission.

Everyone agreed that Ms. Pantezzi should proceed.

NPS Display/Rochambeau

Ms. Thompson stated that Joe DeBellis of the NPS informed her that he expects to have the final changes to the display by the end of January and hopes the installation will be done in the spring. Ms. Thompson thought the HPC should wait until the display is actually here before making any plans for it.

Other

Cell tower - Ms. Thompson said the public hearing for the application for installation of a cell tower on Bloomer road will open on January 7. She commented that there are no historic grounds for objection.

Updated landmarks list - Ms. Thompson stated that she submitted the approved updated historic landmark list to Maria Hlushko for insertion on the Town website, but she has been having trouble making the change/ is trying to get help. Ms. Thompson commented that it would be better for everyone if it were not so difficult to make changes.

White Elephant - Ms. Thompson said the White Elephant is to be painted this year but no changes are sought/a C of A will not be necessary.

Revolutionary Path Group - Ms. Thompson said she attended a conference with the County's Revolutionary Path Group, the aim of which is to put together a Revolutionary War plan for the County in terms of visitors/tourism, etc., and she needs to write up a section about North Salem for inclusion. Ms. Thompson commented that larger towns/cities are better able to do historic-type things that invite tourism than very small towns like North Salem.

Next Historic Studies

Ms. Thompson said the owners of Chase Meadows Farm are somewhat reluctant to pursue historic designation of their silo, but Pam Pooley who lives right next door has expressed interest in designation of her house. Ms. Thompson spoke to Steve LaRocca because he designed an addition for the Pooley house, and he feels there have been too many changes to the house for it to be a very good candidate, but he's willing to discuss it. Ms. Thompson said she is interested because the property itself is historic.

Ms. Pantezzi said she is also interested/she will have a look when she is passing that way.

Ms. Thompson suggested that the HPC review the map and photos taken for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan recommendations/she will bring the map to the February meeting.

To re-appoint Francis Tuoti as Chairman of the HPC and Gail Pantezzi as Vice Chairman:

Motion by: John Malone
Seconded by: Debby Moore
All in favor.

To accept the minutes of the September 2, 2014 HPC meeting:

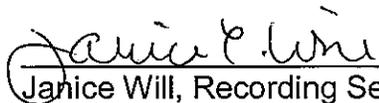
Motion by: John Malone
Seconded by: Debby Moore
All in favor.

Next Meeting: February 3, 2015

Ms. Thompson offered to invite Pam Pooley to the meeting if the HPC is interested in historic designation of her property, and the Chairman said she should ask her to come.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Janice Will, Recording Secretary